

**S t a t e m e n t**  
**by H.E. Mr. Mahmud Mammad-Guliyev**  
**Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan**  
**at the 32th Session of the UN Human Rights Council**  
**Geneva, 13 June 2016**

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to be here and to address such an esteemed audience. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Human Rights Council for giving me this opportunity.

At the beginning, allow me to wish the Council and its distinguished President H.E. Ambassador Choi Kyonglim a successful work during this session. Taking this opportunity let me also express our appreciation to distinguished High Commissioner for Human Rights H.E. Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, for the efforts of his Office in advancing promotion and protection of human rights worldwide.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms have gained particular importance in the light of continuously expanding globalization and integration processes. Ensuring these rights and freedoms has become one of the priorities of the state policy in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Constitution of Azerbaijan and its respective legal acts guarantee the protection of human rights and freedoms, and entrust the executive, legislative and judicial authorities with specific responsibilities to this end.

In this regard, we attach particular importance to enhanced cooperation with the UN Human Rights Council and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. As one of the founding members of the Human Rights Council, we highly commend the work of this august body as an effective mechanism integrating efforts of all parties in the promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms.

To achieve substantial and concrete results, we closely cooperate with the UN human rights treaty bodies, regularly submitting reports on measures taken to implement the rights and freedoms stipulated in the relevant international instruments. The recent periodic reports of the Government of Azerbaijan have been considered and debated at the Committee against Torture, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2015 and 2016, respectively. Furthermore, the delegation of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture paid a visit to our country in 2015. In October 2016, the Human Rights Committee will consider the fourth periodic report of the Government of Azerbaijan submitted under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Extension of standing invitation of Azerbaijan to the UN special procedures mandate holders can be viewed as another example of our willingness to enhanced cooperation with the UN human rights mechanisms. The visits of the UN special procedures mandate holders to our country take place on a regular basis. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has recently paid a visit to Azerbaijan and the experts of the Working Group acknowledged the efforts of Azerbaijani authorities with regard to the reforms in the field of human rights, and provided valuable recommendations. We are looking forward to the visit of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders this autumn, as well as the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs who will make a follow up visit to his previous mission to

Azerbaijan in 2014. We are also looking forward to the visit of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression next year. In addition to this, we are currently considering the proposed dates for the visit by the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association. These are just few examples of our comprehensive interaction and useful cooperation with the UN human rights mechanisms.

Azerbaijan also attaches importance to the mechanism of Universal Periodic Review, and the UPR process has the full backing of the Government of Azerbaijan. Our country on the voluntary basis has submitted the mid-term report on the implementation of the accepted recommendations on the second national report within the second cycle of UPR in March 2016.

Ladies and gentlemen,

One of the negative trends of a contemporary world is growing intolerance, discrimination and violence, which lead to the gross violations of human rights. It is due to this reason that intercultural and interreligious dialogue has become an important tool in promoting tolerance, sustainable peace, stability and development. Azerbaijan attaches primary importance to the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue at all levels.

Located at the crossroads of the East and the West and thus maintaining the values of both civilizations, Azerbaijan plays not only the role of a geographical bridge, but also acts as an intercultural bridge between civilizations.

Just recently, Baku hosted the Seventh Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. The Forum, which was attended by more than 4000 participants, including heads of state and government, academicians,

journalists, experts and representatives of civil society, adopted the Baku Declaration, which will serve as guidelines for states and international organizations in promotion of intercultural dialogue and multiculturalism.

Another significant factor, which makes strong impact on protection of human rights and freedoms, is good governance, including fight against corruption. Establishment and successful functioning of the State Agency for Services to Citizens and Social Innovations under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan is a model of effective public governance. ASAN has significantly increased public confidence in state bodies and is now widely recognized. Therefore, it is not surprising that ASAN has been awarded the United Nations Public Service Award in 2015. Furthermore, the resolution on "Prevention of corruption by promoting efficient public service delivery through technological innovations" submitted by Azerbaijan was unanimously adopted within the Conference of the States Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption last November. The resolution encourages the States Parties to share their best practices in the application of technological innovations and electronic services in public service delivery.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The ongoing armed conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan caused by military aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan and based on territorial claims has resulted in the occupation of almost one fifth of the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan. By violating basic conventional human rights, Armenia has carried out the policy of ethnic cleansing against more than 1 million Azerbaijanis living in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and in Armenia itself who became IDPs and refugees. As a result of these acts, IDPs and refugees have been deprived of their inalienable right to live at their native lands. Today Azerbaijan with a

population of 9.6 million people, hosts one of the biggest communities of IDPs and refugees in the world per capita.

The illegal presence of the Armenian armed forces in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and their offensive actions represent a serious challenge to international and regional peace and security. We call upon the international community to condemn Armenia for blatant violations of international law and the ceasefire regime, to demand its constructive engagement during substantive talks on the withdrawal of its armed forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, and to ensure safe return of IDPs with dignity to their places of origin. The conflict has to be resolved only by ensuring full respect to sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders and based on the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. In this regard, a public expression of the position of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the international human rights obligations of the Republic of Armenia and their violations would be very important. The Human Rights Council and its special mechanisms also should play an increased role in the restoration of the violated human rights of Azerbaijani IDPs as envisaged in these UN Security Council resolutions.

It is with profound satisfaction that the international community celebrates today the tenth anniversary of setting up of Human Rights Council. From the very first day of its existence, the Council has rendered a valuable contribution to promotion and protection of human rights around the globe. We are hopeful that this contribution will continue in future, and therefore allow me to wish the Council new successes in its challenging work.

I thank you for your attention.